

Brian Masse

Member of Parliament
(Windsor West)



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Ottawa

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August 13, 2013

Hon. Lisa Raitt
Minister of Transport
House of Commons
Ottawa, On
K1A 0A6

Windsor

1398 Ouellette, Suite 2
Windsor, Ontario, N8X 1J8
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Dear Minister Raitt,

The owners of the Detroit International Bridge Co. have elected to increase the tolls on their crossing. This 5 percent fare increase on international travelers utilizing the Ambassador Bridge is essentially an additional border tax that will take money out of the pockets of travelers, commuters and businesses. It will apply to automobiles, passenger vehicles, station wagons, personal vans and empty pickups from \$4.75/crossing to \$5.00/crossing effective August 15th.

You have the jurisdiction and responsibility to respond to ensure that these increases are legitimate and in the best interest of all impacted stakeholders. I am urging you to investigate whether a toll increase is warranted at this time.

The *International Bridges and Tunnels Act* confers upon you the authority in Section 15 to address toll increases at border crossings:

15.1 *If the Minister is of the opinion that a change in the tolls, fees or other charges for the use of an international bridge or tunnel is resulting in adverse effects on the flow of traffic, the Minister may, with the approval of the Governor in Council, order the owner or operator of the bridge or tunnel to impose the tolls, fees or other charges that, in the opinion of the Minister, would not result in adverse effects on the flow of traffic. Before ordering an owner or operator to impose specified tolls, fees or other charges, the Minister shall consult with the owner or operator concerning the impact that those tolls, fees or other charges could have on their financial situation.*

As you can see the Act provides for a consultation to occur between yourself and a border operator when any consideration is given to the alteration of tolls. In this case it may be useful to appoint an independent 3rd party to analyze the business case justifying this toll increase.



You may be aware that the Ambassador Bridge is already the most expensive land based international crossing for cars and trucks in Ontario with toll rates roughly 30 percent higher than other comparable crossing across the province. I've received a tremendous amount of feedback from my community regarding the question of border tolls. The overwhelming sentiment expressed is cynicism with the general belief that tolls exponentially higher at the Ambassador Bridge are nothing more than basic gouging.

By vetting a transparent auditing process to examine this new border tax you can at the very least provide the public with information that can allow them to understand why toll increases are necessary at this time.

I trust you will give this issue serious consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Masse". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brian" and last name "Masse" clearly distinguishable.

Brian Masse M.P.
Windsor West